

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 6, line 3 and ending at page 6, line 12 with the following rewritten paragraph:

--By preventing the growth and formation of the silicon clusters in the metallic silicide film, the problem of pitting on the silicon substrate during the gate stack etch can be eliminated. Although prior art techniques anneal the metallic silicide film to reduce its ~~resistivity~~resistivity, and consequentially ~~forming~~form the undesirable silicon clusters, it has been found that, for most purposes, the metallic silicide film has sufficiently low resistivity without annealing. Thus, one aspect of the method of the present invention eliminates annealing the metallic silicide film. Although the step of annealing the metallic silicide film also activates gate impurities, the activation of the gate impurities can be completed during subsequent heat cycles after the etching of the gate stack, such as during shallow junction formation.--